FABLES;

From the GERMAN of

Mr LESSING.

Translated by

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THE TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

MR *Leſſing*, the author of the following little work, ſeems to have wrote it with a view of reducing fable to the original ſimplicity which Æſop, the inventor of this ſpecies of writing, gave it; and as this is the moſt ſtriking method of conveying inſtruction, eſpecially to younger minds, nothing could

could be better adapted to that purpoſe than a plain, ſimple ſtile, ſuited to every capacity, reciting any ſuppoſed event, equally ſimple and unadorned, and placing it in the faireſt point of view, in order to impreſs the mind with the moral truth conveyed thereby.

Phædrus, a Latin poet, was the firſt who undertook to adorn, as he tells us, this ſimple proſaic diction of Æſop with the charms of poetry; yet whatever

whatever the vanity of Phædrus might lead him to think, 'tis plain he has ſucceeded in ſcarcely any thing, but in diſguiſing the beautiful ſimplicity of his original, and ſubſtituting a few tinſel ornaments of his own, in the place of that graceful brevity, that native charm, which ſhines ſo conſpicuouſly in the Fables of Æſop; and it ſeems as if the Romans themſelves had entertained pretty much the ſame opinion of this work,

for

for I don't know of any author, who ſo much as mentions the name of Phædrus.

Yet notwithſtanding all this, Monſ. De la Fontaine tranſlated the ſame Fables into French, and deviated ſtill further from his original. He poliſhed them ſo exceedingly, that they may be compared to the Bow my author ſpeaks of in the firſt Fable of the ſecond book; and drew ſome of them out to ſuch an unmeaſurable length, that the reader,

reader, who finds himſelf quite bewildered, before he is got half-way through, abſolutely loſes ſight of the moral, and imagines he is not reading a Fable, but a poem, whilſt the unfortunate Æſop groans under the weight of ſo much external finery, and is hardly to be known. But I muſt ſpeak ſoftly, Monſieur De la Fontaine is the favourite of the French (thoſe polite people, who give the *ton* to all Europe) and is imitated by

almoſt all the writers of fable. When I ſay almoſt all, I don't mean to include a celebrated Fabuliſt of our own nation, whoſe Fables, like Æſop's, moſt of them took their riſe from events of which he was an eye-witneſs; the elegant ſimplicity of whoſe verſe is ſo admirably adapted to his ſubject. If any will contend, and ſay, that he imitated La Fontaine; let them enjoy that opinion, even then they muſt confeſs he has excelled

him

him whom he imitated; a thing which ſeldom happens.

Mr *Leſſing* has in the original, given a long tedious diſſertation on the nature of Fable, but as it would have ſwelled this tranſlation to a large ſize, and have been approved of by very few, I thought proper to omit it. For the ſame reaſon, I could not avail myſelf of his preface, becauſe in it he deſires the diſſertation may be firſt read, and the Fable judged

of

of by the rules he there lays down; but with ſubmiſſion to him, I am apt to think, that if thoſe little compoſitions pleaſe not by themſelves, no diſſertation in the world, however learned, or however elegant, can make them pleaſe. Our countrymen are too good judges to think by rule, or to be delighted with any thing, merely becauſe Ariſtotle, or ſome ancient rhetorician, hath given orders, it ſhould appear under this

this or that form. It is as ridiculous for a perſon to ſay to another, you muſt of neceſſity be pleaſed with any particular work, becauſe it is exactly conformable to rule, as to ſay to a blind man; you will be charmed with this picture, which I ſhew you, becauſe the laws of perſpective are ſo well preſerved in it.

The reader will perhaps expect I ſhould ſpeak a word or two concerning this tranſlation, and it will be no eaſy

matter

matter to do it with propriety. A perſon is ſeldom or ever a judge of his own performances. Thus much I muſt beg leave to ſay; that I have taken a good deal of pains to keep as cloſe to my original as I poſſibly could, endeavouring at the ſame time to transfuſe a few of its graces into my verſion, without making it ſtiff or aukward; how far I have ſucceeded, muſt be left to the judgment of the public, to whom I offer this my

firſt

firſt attempt, with a trembling hand. If I am happy enough to meet with any degree of favour, I ſhall not ſtop here, but endeavour to merit its approbation by future labours.

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FABLES;

From the GERMAN of

Mr LESSING.

FABLE I.

The Apparition.

RECLIN'D on the brink of a murmuring rill, in the moſt ſolitary part of a certain foreſt, where I have often liſten'd, with curious attention, to the language of

beaſts, I endeavour'd to embelliſh one of my fables with the charms of poetry; a dreſs in which La Fontaine was accuſtom'd to cloath that ſpecies of writing; and which, by that means, is ſuppoſed to be in a great meaſure, eſſential to it. In vain I ſought terms proper to expreſs my ideas: In vain did I toil and torment myſelf. One moment I choſe expreſſions which I rejected the next, and could fix upon none. I aroſe, vexed and diſappointed,

ed, and immediately the muſe of fable ſtood before me.

Addreſſing herſelf to me, with a ſmile of benignity; Young man, ſaid ſhe, why doſt thou trouble thyſelf thus unprofitably? Truth may ſometimes borrow the dreſs of fable, but fable needs not the charm of poetry. What doſt thou but ſtrive to add ornament to what is in the higheſt degree ornamental, and to beautify beauty itſelf?

'Tis

'Tis enough, if the fabuliſt invent, like a good poet, what he relates like a judicious hiſtorian, couching, at the ſame time, a good moral beneath his fictions.

I would have anſwer'd, but the muſe immediately vaniſh'd: Vaniſh'd, exclaim my readers, pray, Sir, if we muſt be deceiv'd, let it be under the appearance of truth, and put not into the mouth of your muſe, a piece of falſe reaſoning

reaſoning invented to hide the deficiency, or barrenneſs of your own genius.

Bravo, gentlemen, proceed. Well then, let me tell you plainly, I ſaw no muſe, 'tis a fable I have related to you, and yourſelves have found out the moral. I am not the firſt, nor ſhall I be the laſt of thoſe, who have had recourſe to a deity, in order to give their thoughts the ſolemn air of oracles.

FABLE

FABLE II.

The Shrew-Mouſe and the Ants.

POOR Ants! ſays the Shrew-Mouſe, is it worth while to toil all the ſummer for ſo ſlender a pittance as you have here ſcrap'd together? What if you ſaw my heaps?

Are they greater than thy wants? anſwer'd one of the induſtrious race: If ſo, men are in the right to purſue thee into

into thy lurking place, deſtroy thy granaries, and puniſh thy avarice and rapine with death!

FABLE III.

The Lion and the Hare.

THERE once ſubſiſted the greateſt intimacy between a Lion and a Hare. Is it true, oh king of beaſts, ſaid the Hare to him, one day, that yourſelf and your whole ſpecies

cies ſhould be ſo terrified at the crowing of a miſerable cock?

'Tis but too true, anſwer'd the Lion; and 'tis generally remark'd, that we large animals have all ſome unaccountable weakneſs: Thou may'ſt have heard, for example, that the elephant ſhudders, and is ſeiz'd with the utmoſt terror, if he but hear the grunting of a hog.

Really! interrupted the Hare; I now conceive why we

we Hares are ſo afraid of dogs.

FABLE IV.

The Aſs and the Horſe.

THE Aſs imagining he was ſwifter than the Horſe, challeng'd him to the race: The Horſe accepts the challenge: They run; the ſpectators laugh, and the Aſs is hooted. Ah, ſays the Aſs, I ſee, I ſee the cauſe of my diſgrace: A

thorn ran into my foot ſome months ago, and I yet feel the ſmart of it.

Pardon me, ſays the Abbè Liederhold, if the ſermon I have preach'd, be not ſo ſolid and inſtructive as might have been expected from a ſucceſsful imitator of * Moſheim: I have, theſe eight days paſt, been troubled with a terrible hoarſeneſs.

FABLE

* Moſheim, a celebrated preacher in Germany.

FABLE V.

Jupiter and the Horſe.

FATHER of beaſts and men! ſaid the Horſe, as he approach'd the throne of Jove, all allow me to be one of the fineſt creatures, with which thou haſt beautified thy new-created world; and ſelf-love inclines me to believe it: But, with all due ſubmiſſion, are there not, in me, ſome things to correct? What wouldſt thou

thou have corrected? anſwered the god, ſmiling; ſpeak, I will hearken to thy wiſh.

Methinks I ſhould be ſwifter, proceeded the Horſe, if my legs were longer and ſlenderer; and, I believe, 'twould not be amiſs, if I had a neck like that of a ſwan: My ſtrength too would be greater, if I had a large roomy cheſt; and, ſince thou haſt deſtin'd me to carry thy favourite creature, man, ſuppoſe I had a natural ſaddle, inſtead of the artificial

artificial one my rider ſets on my back.

Stop a moment, interrupted the god; then, with a majeſtic accent, he ſpoke the word of creation: Immediately the earth heaves with life; the ſhapeleſs matter forms itſelf; the animated limbs unite; and the hideous Camel ſtarts from the duſt.

The Horſe ſaw the new form'd monſter, and trembled with horror at the ſight.

Behold,

Behold, ſaid Jupiter, what thou haſt demanded, long ſlender legs, a long arch'd neck, a large breaſt, and a natural ſaddle.

Shall I give thee this form?

The Horſe ſtood mute with terror.

Go, purſued the god; let what thou haſt ſeen make thee wiſe. For once, I pardon thy raſhneſs: But, in order that thou may'ſt remember this, and repent, caſting an eye of benignity on the Camel;

mel; Live, ſaid he, and enjoy thy newly-receiv'd being; and may the Horſe never ſee thee but tremble.

FABLE VI.

The Monkey and the Fox.

TELL me, ſaid an arrogant Monkey to a Fox; where is the animal ſo expert, ſo perfect in his kind, that I can't imitate?

But tell me, in thy turn, ſaid the Fox; where is the animal

animal ſo mean, ſo contemptible, that will ſtoop to imitate thee?

Writers of Germany, need I expreſs myſelf more clearly?

FABLE VII.

The Nightingale and the Peacock.

A NIGHTINGALE that lov'd ſociety, finding, inſtead of friendſhip, nothing but envy amongſt his fellow-ſongſters of the woods, ſaid, within himſelf,

himſelf, perhaps, I may find a friend amongſt birds of a different ſpecies, and flew with confidence to the Peacock.

How I admire you, ſaid he, beautiful Peacock!——How am I charm'd with you, agreeable Nightingale!—— Why don't we become friends?

Envy, herſelf, anſwered the Nightingale, cannot create any miſunderſtanding betwixt us; you are form'd to charm the eye, and I to delight the ear.

The Nightingale and the Peacock became united in the bonds of ſincere friendſhip.

FABLE VIII.

The Wolf and the Shepherd.

THE Wolf, hearing that a contagious diſtemper had deſtroyed the flock of a neighbouring Shepherd, went to condole with him upon his misfortue.

What, ſays he, my friend, is it true that you have ſuffer'd

fer'd ſuch a terrible loſs?—Are all your ſheep dead?—Poor, charming creatures! So fat, ſo gentle!—How am I affected at this miſchance? I could weep tears of blood!

I am greatly obliged to thee, replied the honeſt Shepherd; I ſee thou haſt a very feeling heart.

Feeling heart! yes, undoubtedly, ſaid the Shepherd's dog, when the misfortunes of another deprive him of food.

FABLE IX.

The Bull and the Horſe.

A BOLD child rode full ſpeed upon a mettleſome Horſe.

What a ſhame! ſaid a wild Bull; no, I would never ſuffer a child to govern me.

And, for my part, ſaid the Horſe, I don't ſee what honour I ſhould gain by throwing a child off my back.

FABLE

FABLE X.

The Graſhopper and the Nightingale.

I HAVE my admirers as well as thou haſt, ſaid the Graſhopper to the Nightingale; and there are thoſe that think my voice muſical enough. Indeed! Pray who are they, theſe excellent judges?

The induſtrious reapers, ſaid the firſt, who hear me with pleaſure, when they re-

return

return weary from the field; and thou muſt agree with me, that they are the moſt uſeful part of the human ſpecies.

I grant ye they are, replied the Nightingale; but pray, how can they be ſuppos'd to underſtand any thing of the matter? Can we imagine thoſe plain, uninſtructed people, all whoſe ideas are, in a manner, abſorbed by continued labour, ſhould have very delicate ears? No, friend, no: But when the

Shepherd,

Shepherd, who plays ſo charmingly on the flute, is raviſh'd at the ſound of thy voice, and liſtens, with tranſport, to thy ſongs, then I will give thee leave to be proud of thy performances.

FABLE XI.

The Nightingale and the Hawk.

AS a Nightingale was chanting his accuſtom'd notes, a hawk ſous'd upon him; ſince thou ſingeſt ſo charmingly, ſaid

ſaid he, thou muſt be a delicious morſel!

Did the Hawk ſay this out of ſpite, out of ſcorn, or out of ſimplicity? I can't tell. But I heard a perſon ſay, yeſterday; that lady, who is ſo fine a poet, muſt undoubtedly be extremely handſome; and certainly he ſaid it through ſimplicity.

FABLE

FABLE XII.

The Warrier Wolf.

MY father, of glorious memory, ſays a young Wolf to a Fox, was a true hero. He was the terror of the country! —He triumph'd ſucceſſively over more than two hundred foes; and ſent their gloomy ſouls to the ſhades below. Is it not ſurpriſing that he was conquer'd at laſt?

So, ſo, ſaid the Fox, that is the language of panegyric with a witneſs! But, the ſimplicity of hiſtory bids us add: the two hundred foes, over whom he triumph'd, were poor defenceleſs Sheep and Aſſes; and the enemy that conquer'd him, was the firſt Bull he dar'd to attack.

FABLE

FABLE XIII.

The Phœnix.

MANY ages had now paſs'd away, ſince the Phœnix had been ſeen in the world: At laſt he appear'd. Immediately, all the different kinds of animals, both birds and beaſts, flock round him. Aſtoniſh'd at his beauty, tranſported, raviſh'd out of themſelves, as it were; none thought they could ſufficiently praiſe his per-

perfections. But, in a ſhort time, the wiſeſt and moſt prudent amongſt them began to look upon him with an eye of compaſſion; and, ſighing, ſaid: Unfortunate Phœnix! ſevere deſtiny has made him feel all its rigour; the only one of his ſpecies, he will never know the pleaſure of loving, or of being beloved.

FABLE

FABLE XIV.

The Goose.

A GOOSE had feathers whiter than ſnow; proud of this dazzling gift of nature, ſhe imagin'd herſelf born to be a Swan; forgets what ſhe is, and deſerting her comrades, goes and ſwims, majeſtic in ſtate, on the border of the pool. Sometimes ſtretching out her neck, ſhe endeavours to cover the ſmallneſs of her ſize,

ſize, which betrays her pride; ſometimes ſhe ſtrives to bend it into that noble arch, which renders the Swan worthy to be the bird of Apollo: But alas! her efforts are vain; the ſtiff rigidity of its make will not permit it to bend; and, after all, ſhe remains a Gooſe as before, but becomes ridiculous and contemptible for her ſilly affectation.

FABLE

FABLE XV.

The Hog and the Oak.

A HOG fed in a ravenous manner upon a quantity of acorns, that lay under a tall ſpreading Oak, which the wind, and their own ripeneſs, had caus'd to fall.

Ungrateful animal! ſays the Oak at laſt, thou feedeſt upon my fruits, but never thankeſt me from whence they proceed.

The

The Hog ſtops a moment, and grunts theſe words: I ſhould not ſpare either gratitude or thanks, if I could imagine thou hadſt ſhed theſe acorns for me.

FABLE XVI.

The Waſps.

A STATELY war-horſe, kill'd by a cannon-ſhot under his couragious rider, was become the load of vermin. Nature, who is never idle, makes

uſe

uſe of the deſtruction of one body, for the production of another.

A ſwarm of young Waſps proceeded from the corrupted carcaſs. How noble, how divine is our original! cried the Waſps: The moſt ſuperb of Horſes, the favourite of Neptune, is the author of our being!

The ſilly vanity of the Waſps eſcap'd not the attention of the fabuliſt; he could not help thinking on the modern

Italians, who perſuade themſelves, they are the deſcendants of the ancient Romans, merely becauſe they were born upon their graves.

FABLE XVII.

The Sparrows.

THE workmen repaired an old church, where thouſands of Sparrows had built their neſts. As ſoon as they had finiſhed the reparations, the Sparrows returned in ſearch

of

of their old dwellings, but found them wall'd up. Of what uſe, ſaid they, is this immenſe edifice! Let us go, let us abandon this heap of ſtone, which is become entirely unſerviceable.

FABLE XVIII.

The Oſtrich.

I AM going to fly, cried the Oſtrich, and immediately the birds flock'd round her, full of expectation. Come, I am juſt

juſt going off, cried ſhe again. She ſtretches out her large wings, leaps forward, and looks like a veſſel with her ſails unfurl'd; but her feet quit not the ground.

Thus it is with thoſe barren geniuſſes, who, in the firſt lines of their incoherent odes, expand their proud wings, and threaten to fly above the clouds, nay, above the ſtars; and yet, poor ſouls! they creep conſtantly on the ground, and

plow

plow up the duſt in their heroic flights.

FABLE XIX.

The Sparrow and the Oſtrich.

YOU may boaſt as much as you pleaſe of your ſtrength and ſize, ſaid the Sparrow to the Oſtrich, but you will never be ſo good a bird as I am; I don't fly far, 'tis true, and that only by ſtarts, yet I do fly, but you cannot do any any ſuch thing.

I would

I would ſooner give the name of genius, to the playful author of a bacchanalian ſong, or a love ſong, which inſpires joy, than to the dull, heavy writer of a long * Arminiade.

FABLE XX.

The Dogs.

HOW the race of Dogs is degenerated in theſe countries! ſaid a Water-ſpaniel that had

* A dull heroic poem.

had ſeen the world. In that diſtant part of the globe, which men call the Indies, are Dogs indeed! there I have brethren ſtill. You will not credit me perhaps, yet I have ſeen it: There are Dogs there, that fear not the Lion himſelf, nay, they have even the boldneſs to attack him.

But do they get the better of him? demanded a Greyhound, who had more modeſty than the travell'd Dog.

As to that, replied the other,

I can't

I can't poſitively tell you; but is it not a prodigious mark of courage to attack a Lion!—— Pſhaw, anſwer'd the Grey-hound, if they can't get the better of him, wherein do thy boaſted Dogs excel us? they are only greater fools.

FABLE XXI.

The Fox and the Stork.

THOU haſt been a great traveller, ſaid the Fox to the Stork: Pray give me ſome account

account of the countries thou haſt ſeen? Then the Stork told him every marſh, and every meadow, where ſhe had eaten the beſt taſted worms, and the fatteſt frogs.

You have been long at Paris, Sir: Pray, which is the beſt eating-houſe? Where can one drink the fineſt wines.

FABLE. XXII.

The Owl and the Searcher of Treaſure.

A MAN of a bad character ventur'd amongſt the ruins of an old caſtle, where thieves often lurk'd, in ſearch of treaſure. He ſaw an Owl there that had juſt ſeized a mouſe, which ſhe devoured.

That action, ſays he, ill ſuits a philoſophic bird, the favourite of Minerva.

Why

Why not? anſwer'd the Owl. Becauſe I love tranquillity and meditation, would you have me live on air? I know very well, that you men require it of your literati.

FABLE XXIII.

The Young Swallow.

WHAT are ye doing? ſaid a young Swallow, to ſome induſtrious ants. We are laying up proviſions, anſwer'd they,

they, for the winter, and are oblig'd to work pretty hard, in order to compleat our ſtores. 'Tis wiſely done, ſaid the Swallow; I'll do the like myſelf. Immediately ſhe gets together a quantity of ſpiders and dead flies, and carries them to her neſt.

To what purpoſe is all this? ſaid the mother: Purpoſe? replied the young one; theſe are to be our winter proviſions. Help me, dear mother; the ants

ants taught me this piece of prudence.

Leave theſe little cares to earthly animals; to ants, replied the mother: What is wiſdom in them, would be fooliſhneſs in Swallows, who are animals of a ſuperior order. Nature, ever beneficent, has granted us a more favourable deſtiny. When the ſummer is paſt, when plenty is fled, we depart from theſe countries. In our paſſage, a ſoft ſleep ſteals upon us by gentle

gentle degrees; we then plunge into ponds of ſtanding water, where we repoſe ſecure from care and trouble, till returning ſpring awakens us to new life by its genial warmth.

FABLE XXIV.

The Bird Merops.

GIVE me leave to aſk you a queſtion, ſaid a young Eagle to an Owl, who had the character of being extremely wiſe,

wiſe. I am told there is a certain bird, that when he would ſoar aloft towards heaven, flies tail foremoſt, and his head to the ground: Pray, is it true?

True? anſwer'd the Owl: No, no, child, nothing is more falſe, 'tis a ſilly fiction invented by man, who, in all likelihood, meant himſelf, when he ſpoke of Merops; for man would mount up into Heaven, and yet never loſe ſight of the earth.

FABLE

FABLE XXV.

The Pelican.

FATHERS can never do too much for well-diſpoſed children; but, when a wretched father makes himſelf a beggar, in order to feed the extravagancies, or vices of a worthleſs ſon, this exceſs of love degenerates into folly.

The pious Pelican ſeeing her young in want of food, tore open her breaſt with her bill,

bill, and quench'd their thirſt with her own blood. Tendereſt of mothers! ſaid an Eagle, I cannot help admiring thee, while I pity thy blindneſs. See what a number of miſchievous cuckows thou haſt hatch'd with thy young!

What the Eagle ſaid was true; the Cuckow had drop'd her eggs in the neſt of the Pelican. Were the lives of theſe ungrateful birds worth redeeming at ſo great a price?

FABLE XXVI.

The Lion and Tyger.

IT is ſaid, the Lion and the Hare ſleep with their eyes open.

In this manner, the Lion fatigu'd with the chace, ſlept one day at the mouth of his terrible den.

A Tyger paſs'd by, and ſaid, in a jocular ſtrain: The Lion is a ſtranger to fear, yet does he not ſleep with his eyes open like a Hare?

Like

Like a Hare? ſaid the Lion; and leaping nimbly up, ſeizes the joker's throat, in a moment the Tyger lies breathleſs on the ground, and the Lion calmly compoſes himſelf again to ſleep.

FABLE XXVII.

The Stag and the Bull.

AN unweildy Bull, and a light nimble Stag fed together in the ſame paſture.

Friend,

Friend, ſaid the Bull, if the Lion ſhould come and ſet upon us, let us ſtand by each other; we are brave, and may prove too many for him. Oh! You muſt excuſe me, ſaid the Stag, I know the Lion's ſtrength too well to pretend to engage in ſuch an unequal combat; my heels may ſave me from his fury; my horns and teeth never will.

FABLE

FABLE XXVIII.

The Aſs and the Wolf.

AN Aſs meeting an hungry Wolf, begg'd him, with a trembling voice, to have compaſſion on him. I am ſick and in miſery, ſaid he: See what a terrible thorn I've got in my foot.

Really I pity thee, ſaid the Wolf; I think myſelf oblig'd in conſcience, to deliver thee from thy misfortunes.

Scarcely

Scarcely were theſe words out of his mouth, when he flew upon the Aſs, and tore him in pieces.

FABLE XXIX.

The Cavalier of the Game at Cheſs.

TWO boys playing at Cheſs happened to want a Cavalier, they ſet a mark upon a ſuperfluous figure, and agreed it ſhould paſs for one.

A word with you, cried the old Cavaliers to the new one: Whence come you, Mr Upſtart?

Hold your tongues, fools, ſaid the boys, don't he do us the ſame ſervice as yourſelves?

FABLE XXX.

Æſop and the Aſs.

I BEG, ſays the Aſs to Æſop, if you bring me any more upon the ſtage, that you would make me ſay ſomething

thing judicious, ſomething witty. Something witty? anſwer'd Æſop. People then would call thee, the moraliſt, and me, the Aſs.

BOOK

BOOK II.

FABLE I.

The Statue of Braſs.

A STATUE of Braſs, the maſterpiece of an excellent artiſt, happen'd to be melted down by a terrible fire, and in that condition, fell into the hands of another ſtatuary. His happy chiſſel produc'd another; the ſubject whereof

was different from the former, but the workmanſhip was full as exquiſite, and the expreſſion equally noble. Envy ſaw it, and gnaſh'd her teeth. At laſt ſhe endeavour'd to conſole herſelf by ſaying: This ſtatue is paſſable; but the workman would not have made it, if he had not found the metal of the old one.

FABLE

FABLE II.

Hercules.

WHEN Hercules enter'd the heavenly manſions, he ſaluted all the gods, beginning with Juno. All the aſſembly of deities were amaz'd at it, not excepting Juno herſelf. 'Tis thy greateſt enemy, ſaid they, whom thou honoureſt ſo much. Yes, ſaid Hercules, ſhe is my enemy; but I had never perform'd actions that merited

merited Heaven, had it not been for her perſecutions.

Olympus approved the anſwer of the new made god, and Juno was reconciled to him.

FABLE III.

The Child and the Serpent.

A CHILD playing with a tame Serpent, ſaid to it; my dear little animal, doſt thou imagine I would be ſo familiar with thee, if thy

thy venom was not taken out? You Serpents are the moſt perverſe ungrateful creatures. I remember to have read, that a good-natur'd country-man found a Serpent under a hedge, almoſt dead with cold; perhaps it was one of thy anceſtors. He took it up and warm'd it in his breaſt; but it was ſcarcely come to life, when it ſtung its bene-factor; and the too charitable peaſant died of the wound.

This

This is aſtoniſhing, ſaid the Serpent: How partial are your hiſtorians! Our's relate this hiſtory in a different manner. Your charitable peaſant believ'd the Serpent dead, as it appear'd to be: Its ſkin was beautifully variegated with different colours; he took it up, and was haſtening home in order to flea it. Now tell me whether the Serpent was ungrateful?

Hold thy tongue, replied the boy; where is the ingrate

grate who can't find ſome excuſe to juſtify himſelf?---

Well anſwer'd, interrupted the boy's father, who had liſten'd to the dialogue. Nevertheleſs, my ſon, if ever thou ſhould'ſt hear an inſtance of ingratitude baſer than ordinary; forget not to examine every circumſtance to the bottom, and be extremely backward in fixing ſo foul a ſtain on any man's character. Thoſe benefactors who deſerve the name, have ſeldom

met

met with ingratitude; I almoſt dare venture to ſay, for the honour of human nature, that they have never done it. But too many there are, who, under pretence of doing good offices to others, are actuated only by mean ſelf-intereſted views, and 'tis but juſt, that thoſe men ſhould ever meet with the return they deſerve.

FABLE

FABLE IV.

The dying Wolf.

A WOLF at the point of death, caſt a retroſpect on his paſt life, and examin'd his actions with the air of a penitent. I have been a great offender no doubt, ſaid he; yet, I hope, I can ſay it without flattering myſelf, there are many much more criminal than I am. I have done ill 'tis true; but I have likewiſe

done good. One day, I remember, a Lamb ſtray'd from the flock, and came bleating to the place where I ſtood; I might have kill'd it with the greateſt eaſe; yet I meddled not with it. Much about the ſame time, I had the patience to hear the ill-language and abuſe of a Sheep, with an indifference ſo much the more extraordinary, as I had nothing to fear, there being no Dog at hand to defend her.

I can

I can bear witneſs to the truth of theſe things, ſaid a Fox, who attended him in his laſt moments: all the circumſtances are freſh in my memory. 'Twas at the time when thou waſt almoſt choak'd by the bone which ſtuck in thy throat, and which the Crane was afterwards kind enough to extract from thence.

FABLE V.

The Bull.

A STRONG luſty Bull going into the ſtable, broke down the top of the door-way, which happen'd to be too low for him. Look there, maſter? ſays a Calf, I never do ſuch a piece of miſchief.

Thou! No, ſays the farmer, I wiſh with all my heart thou couldſt.

The

The Calf talks here like the lower claſs of moraliſts. Wicked Bayle! ſay they: What numbers of religious men amongſt us are offended at thy writings, and thy impious doubts! Oh! Gentlemen, be offended as long as you pleaſe; we would permit you every thing almoſt, could you but catch one ſpark of his genius.

FABLE

FABLE VI.

The Peacocks and the Crow.

A CROW found ſome Peacock's feathers beautifully variegated with different colours; the vain bird deck'd herſelf with them, and when ſhe imagined herſelf in full dreſs, ſhe preſum'd to go into the company of the Peacocks. They immediately diſcover'd her, and falling upon her all at once, ſoon ſtripp'd her of her

her borrow'd plumes. Ceaſe, ceaſe, cry'd ſhe at length; you have got all your feathers, pray leave me my own. The Peacocks perceiving ſome upon her wings that were of a brighter colour than the reſt: hold thy peace, thou meddling fool, ſaid they; the feathers we ſee can't be thine, 'tis impoſſible. So the ſilly bird did not only loſe her borrow'd plumes, but her own to boot.

FABLE

FABLE VII.

The Lion in Company with the Aſs.

WHEN the Lion in Æſop's tables went to the foreſt in company with the Aſs, whom he had pitch'd upon to fright the beaſts with his uncouth bray, an impertinent Magpye cry'd out to him: thou art in fine company indeed! Art not thou aſham'd to be ſeen with an Aſs? What, ſays the Lion,

Lion, is there any ſhame in being ſeen with one that is uſeful to me?

Such are the ſentiments of the great, whenever they deign to honour perſons of mean birth with their company.

FABLE VIII.

The Aſs in the Lion's Company.

WHEN Æſop's Aſs went towards the foreſt with the Lion, who made the ſame

uſe of him as the huntſman does of his horn, another Aſs met him.

Good morrow, brother, ſaid he: Impertinent! cry'd our gentleman Aſs; and why am I impertinent? replied the other; art thou a whit leſs an Aſs, becauſe thou art in the company of the Lion?

FABLE

FABLE. IX.

The blind Hen.

A HEN having become blind, ſtill continued to ſcratch the ground as before, but with all her toil ſhe could not find a ſingle grain of corn, becauſe another Hen that could ſee clearly, but had tender talons, went continually with her, and as faſt as the poor bird ſcratch'd up any

corn,

corn, ſo faſt the other pick'd it up.

The indefatigable German adds collection to collection, heaps concordance on concordance, and the cunning Frenchman makes his advantage thereof.

FABLE X.

Jupiter and the Aſſes.

THE Aſſes complained to Jupiter, that they were cruelly us'd by man. We carry their burdens,

burdens, ſaid they; burdens, under which themſelves, and every animal weaker than us, would inevitably faint; nevertheleſs, they beat us unmercifully, ſtriving thereby to make us travel with a ſwiftneſs of pace, which Nature has denied to us, and which, if ſhe had not, our heavy loads would render impoſſible.

Reſtrain them, Oh! Jupiter, from acting thus unjuſtly towards us, if it be poſſible to

hinder

hinder mankind from doing evil. We are willing to be their ſervants, ſince thou haſt in all likelihood created us for their uſe; but are not willing to be beat without neceſſity, and out of mere wantonneſs.

My creature, ſaid Jupiter to the deputy, your demand is reaſonable; yet, I don't ſee how 'tis poſſible to perſuade men, that your natural ſlowneſs is not the effect of ſloth; and while they think ſo, you will

will be always beat. Notwithſtanding this, I will mitigate the rigour of your deſtiny. Inſenſibility ſhall hereafter be your lot: your backs ſhall harden with blows, and weary the arm of him that beats you.

Jupiter, cry'd the Aſſes, thou art ever good, ever merciful! and fill'd with joy they left the throne, which is the throne of unbounded goodneſs.

FABLE

FABLE XI.

The Lamb well guarded.

HYLAX, of the race of Wolf-Dogs, guarded a Lamb. Lycodes, who reſembled a Wolf more than a Dog, runs at Hylax, and cries out, ſoho, Wolf, what is thy buſineſs with that Lamb?

Wolf indeed! Wolf thyſelf, anſwer'd Hylax (the Dogs knew not each other) quit this place, or I'll preſently ſhew

ſhew thee that I am ſet to guard it.

Thou guard it, ſaid Lycodes? a fine guardian truly! To it they went, and, while they fought, the poor Lamb was torn in pieces.

FABLE XII.

Jupiter and Apollo.

JUPITER and Apollo diſputed one day, which was the beſt markſman. Come,

ſays Apollo, let us make trial of our ſkill: with that he bent his bow, and pierc'd the mark ſo exactly, that Jupiter ſaw no poſſibility of excelling him. You ſhoot extremely well, ſaid he to him; I ſhould find it difficult to do better; I'll try ſome other time.

How prudent is Jupiter! He has not ſhot yet.

FABLE

FABLE XIII.

The Water Snake.

THE Frogs rejecting the peaceable Log, which Jupiter had given them for a king; he had juſt ſent them a voracious Water Snake.

If thou wilt be our king, ſaid the Frogs, why doſt thou devour us? Why, ſaid the Serpent, becauſe you have demanded me for king.

But

But I did not, ſaid a Frog, whom he already devoured with his eyes. Didſt thou not? replied he, that is the very reaſon why I will eat thee.

FABLE XIV.

The Fox and the Maſk.

A Fox finding a Maſk, ſuch as the players uſed in ancient times, with the mouth gaping open; what a head is this! ſaid he, muſing; not a drachm of brains, and the mouth wide open!

open! It has certainly belonged to ſome great talker.

Eternal babblers! ye that torment the moſt innocent of our ſenſes; this Fox knew your characters.

FABLE XV.

The Raven and the Fox.

A Raven held in his claws a piece of poiſoned fleſh, which an angry gardener had laid, in order to kill his neighbour's Cats.

He

He flew upon the top of an oak, and was going to eat his prey, when a Fox crept ſoftly to the foot of the tree, and cries out to him; I ſalute thee, Oh, noble bird of Jove! Whom doſt thou take me for? demanded the Raven. Whom? ſaid the Fox; art thou not the ſwift, majeſtic Eagle, that deſcendeſt every day from the right hand of the Thunderer, upon this oak, in order to feed me, unworthy as I am? wherefore doſt thou endeavour to

diſguiſe

diſguiſe thyſelf? do I not ſee in thy triumphant talons, the preſent my prayers have obtained, and which thy great maſter continues to ſend me by thee.

The Raven, ſurprized at this, is inwardly pleaſed to be taken for an Eagle, and ſays within himſelf, let me keep up my ſuppoſed dignity, and not let the Fox ſee his miſtake.

Generouſly fooliſh, he lets fall the piece of fleſh, and flies proudly into the air.

The

The Fox ſeized it, while he deſpiſed the giver, and eat it with a malicious joy; but his joy is ſoon turned into ſadneſs. The poiſon takes effect and kills him.

Deteſtable flatterers, may your praiſes ever meet the like reward!

FABLE XVI.

The Miſer.

UNFORTUNATE man that I am! ſaid a miſer to his neighbour,

neighbour, laſt night ſome villain has taken away my dear money, which I had buried in my garden, and put a vile ſtone in its place. You would have made no uſe of it, ſaid his neighbour; imagine the ſtone to be money, and you will be not a whit the poorer.

True, ſays he, I ſhall be no poorer, but another will be enriched by it: Another will be enriched by it; Oh! I ſhall die with vexation.

FABLE XVII.

The Raven.

A Fox ſaw a Raven who robbed the altars of the Gods; he lived, like many others, on the offerings which pious perſons brought thither. I ſhould be glad to know now, ſaid the Fox, within himſelf, whether the Raven partakes with the Gods as being a prophetic bird, or whether he is looked

looked upon as ſuch, becauſe he has the impudence to partake with the Gods.

FABLE XVIII.

Jupiter and the Sheep.

The Sheep, expoſed to the ill uſage and malice of other animals, came to lay her complaints before the throne of Jove; and begged him to alleviate her miſery.

Jupiter received her with kindneſs; I perceive, ſaid he, good-

good-natured creature, that I ought to have armed thee againſt thy enemies; but let us ſee how I can remedy this defect. Thou ſhalt have thy choice. Shall I arm thy mouth with a formidable ſet of teeth, or ſheath thy feet with ſharp claws?

Oh, no! ſaid the Sheep, let me not in the leaſt reſemble the beaſts of prey.

Shall I put poiſon under thy tongue?

Alas!

Alas! ſaid the Sheep, venomous beaſts are ſo deteſted!

What then ſhall I do? Shall I give ſtrength to thy neck, and arm thy forehead with horns?

No, father, no, I might then, perhaps, become unruly and miſchievous like the Goat.

But thou muſt be able to do miſchief thyſelf, if thou wou'dſt have other animals refrain from injuring thee.

I able to do miſchief! ſaid the Sheep, ſighing, Oh! father,

ther, leave me as I am; I am afraid the power of hurting would awaken the desire to hurt, and I had rather suffer injustice than commit it.

Jupiter blessed the peaceful Sheep; and, since that moment, she has forgot her complaints.

FABLE

FABLE XIX.

The Fox and the Tyger.

OH! that I was as ſwift and ſtrong as thou art; ſaid the Fox to the Tyger.

Have I nothing elſe that would ſuit thee? ſaid the Tyger.

I know not, replied the Fox.

And what thinkeſt thou to my ſpotted ſkin? it is as variegated as thy wit: If thou hadſt

hadſt it, thy outſide would correſpond with thy inſide.

That is the reaſon, ſaid the Fox, why it would not ſuit me; I muſt not appear as I am, and would to Heaven I could change my hair for feathers.

FABLE XX.

The Man and the Dog.

A MAN was bit by a Dog, and being enraged thereat, he knocked him on the head.

The

The bite appeared dangerous, and a phyſician was ſent for.

The only method that can be uſed, ſaid the doctor, is to moiſten a morſel of bread in the wound, and give it to the Dog to eat. If this ſympathetic remedy ſucceeds not—here he ſhrugged up his ſhoulders.

Unhappy fury! ſaid the patient; this remedy is impoſſible, for I have killed the Dog.

FABLE XXI.

The Bunch of Grapes.

I KNOW a poet who has received much greater prejudice from ill-judged praiſes of his friends, than the ſcornful envy of his critics and enemies.

Yes, 'tis ſour, ſaid the Fox, meaning the Bunch of Grapes at which he had leaped till he was weary. A Sparrow happening to hear him; I can never

never believe, ſays he, that ſo fine a Bunch can be ſour! He flies to it; taſtes it, and finding it extremely delicious, he calls about a hundred of his brethren; eat, eat, ſays he, here is an excellent Bunch of Grapes, and the Fox ſays 'tis ſour. They all fell on at once, and took care that no Fox ſhould ever leap at it again.

FABLE

FABLE XXII.

The Fox.

A FOX being purſued, leapt upon a wall, and in getting down on the other ſide, which was pretty high, he aſſiſted himſelf by means of a buſh; with this help he came off well enough, but was wounded by the thorns; what a miſerable helper thou art, cried the Fox; thou canſt not aſſiſt, but do miſchief at the ſame time.

FABLE XXIII.

The Sheep.

IT being the anniverſary of Jupiter's marriage, he made a feaſt according to cuſtom. All animals carried him preſents; the Sheep alone appeared not; Juno immediately took notice of it.

Where is the Sheep? ſaid the Goddeſs; wherefore does the pious Sheep neglect to bring us her offering.

Be

Be not angry, O Goddeſs, ſaid the Dog, this very day I ſaw the Sheep; ſhe was in the greateſt affliction, and lamented herſelf moſt bitterly.

What was the occaſion of her ſorrow? ſaid Juno; already moved with pity.

Unfortunate creature that I am! ſaid ſhe; I have neither wool, nor milk: What can I offer to Jupiter? Shall I alone preſent myſelf before his throne without an offering?

No,

No, I'll desire the shepherd to offer myself in sacrifice.

That very instant the smoke of the sacrifice, attended by the prayer of the shepherd, mounted above the clouds, and carried an agreeable odour into Olympus. If immortal eyes could have shed tears, Juno would now have wept for the first time.

FABLE

FABLE XXIV.

The She-Goats.

THERE was a time when the She-Goats were deſtitute of horns; they prayed to Jupiter, that they might have them.

Reflect well on what ye aſk, ſaid the God; there is another gift annexed thereto, which perhaps will not be very agreeable to ye.

They

They ſtill perſevering in their prayer, Jupiter ſaid; let the She-Goats have horns.

Immediately horns ſprouted on their foreheads, and a beard grew upon their chins, a thing equally new to them. The grief they felt at having this unlucky beard, far outweighed the joy their horns gave them.

FABLE XXV.

The wild Apple Tree.

A SWARM of Bees took up their habitation in the hollow trunk of a wild Apple Tree, and in a ſhort time, filled it with honey.

The Tree grew vain upon this, and deſpiſed all the Trees in the neighbourhood.

What a ſilly coxcomb thou art! ſaid the Roſe-Buſh, thou prideſt thyſelf in ſweets which belong

belong not to thee, but to others; is thy own fruit leſs ſour? Communicate thereto, if thou canſt, the ſweetneſs of the honey thou boaſteſt of; then, and not till then, mankind will ſet a value on thee.

FABLE XXVI.

The Stag and the Fox.

THE Stag ſaid to the Fox, woe to us, poor, weak animals, for the Lion has joined ſociety with the Wolf!

With

With the Wolf? ſaid the Fox, that is no ſuch terrible news; the Lion roars, the Wolf howls; ſo that you will hear them before they come, and will have time enough to ſave yourſelves. But if the Lion ſhould ever take it into his head to aſſociate with the quick ſighted Lynx, who hunts without noiſe, then indeed, we ſhall be all undone.

FABLE

FABLE XXVII.

The Thorn-Buſh.

TELL me, ſaid the Willow to the Thorn-Buſh, wherefore doſt thou covet the clothes of paſſengers? What wouldſt thou do with them? Of what uſe are they to thee? None in the world, ſaid the Buſh, I want them not, but I take a pleaſure in tearing them.

FABLE

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FABLE

FABLE XXVIII.

The Furies.

MY Furies grow old, ſaid Pluto to the meſſenger of the Gods; they are quite worn out in the ſervice; canſt thou not procure me ſome freſh ones? Go, Mercury, fly to the world above us, and chuſe me out three women fit for this office. Mercury obeys.

A while after, Juno ſays to her maid; Iris, I want three young

young women of irreproachable manners, and untainted chaſtity; doſt think thou canſt find them in yon lower world? But take great care; they muſt be perfectly chaſte, I want to put Venus to the bluſh; ſhe boaſts that ſhe has ſubdued all the fair ſex, without exception. Go then, and bring them to me, wherever they can be met with. Iris departs.

Iris ſought every corner of the globe with the utmoſt exactneſs,

actneſs but, 'twas all in vain. She came back without her errand.

What, alone! ſays Juno, is it poſſible! Oh chaſtity! Oh virtue!

Goddeſs, ſaid Iris, I was too late, elſe I had brought you three young women, perfectly ſevere, perfectly chaſte; they had never ſmiled on any man, and had extinguiſhed in their hearts every ſpark of love; they———

Too late? interrupted Juno, what was the reaſon?

Mercury

Mercury had taken them away a moment before, in order to carry them to Pluto.

To Pluto? three young women who are virtue itſelf! And for what uſe does he intend them?

For Furies, ſaid Iris.

FABLE XXIX.

Tiræſias.

TIRÆSIAS took his ſtaff, and ſet forward on his journey. He goes towards a grove

ſacred to the majeſty of the Thunderer. In the midſt of this grove, at a place where three ways met, he found two Serpents twined together.

He lifted up his ſtaff, and ſtruck the amorous Serpents; when, Oh miracle! he inſtantly became a woman.

Nine months afterwards, the woman Tiræſias walking again in the grove, found preciſely in the ſame place, two Serpents fighting; ſhe lifts up her ſtaff, and ſtruck the

furious

furious Serpents; when behold! in the inſtant that her ſtaff touched the Serpents, the woman Tiræſias became a man again.

FABLE XXX.

Minerva.

LET them alone, my friend, regard not theſe little enviers of thy growing reputation. Why wilt thou immortalize their names, already doomed to oblivion?

In

In that impious battle which the Giants fought with the Gods, they oppoſed to Minerva, a terrible Dragon. Minerva ſeized the Dragon, and with a vigorous arm hurled it into the firmament. It ſhines there to this day; and that which was ſo frequently the reward of great actions, was to the Dragon a puniſhment worthy of envy.

BOOK III.

FABLE I.

The Owner of the Bow.

A CERTAIN man had a Bow made of Ebony, with which he could hit a mark at a ſurprizing diſtance: he ſet the utmoſt value on it. One day he ſurveyed it carefully, and ſaid: 'Tis pity this Bow

Bow has no other ornament but its ſmooth poliſh; I think it would be far handſomer if it were carved. He carried it immediately to the moſt ſkilful carver he could find, who repreſented a hunting match thereon. What ſubject could ſuit a Bow ſo well as a hunting match?

The owner received it with tranſport; dear bow, cry'd he, thou highly deſerveſt theſe ornaments! He bent it, in order

der to ſhoot, and the Bow broke that inſtant.

FABLE II.

The Nightingale and the Lark.

What ſhall we ſay to thoſe poets who fly to ſuch amazing heights, that their readers loſe ſight of them? Let us aſk them the queſtion which the Nightingale aſked the Lark; Doſt thou ſoar ſo high, my friend, in order that thou mayſt not be heard?

FABLE

FABLE III.

Solomon's Ghoſt.

A CERTAIN old man cultivated his ground, and bore with indifference the fatigue and heat of the day. He ſcattered pure, healthy, ſeed over the boſom of the earth, ever ready to recompenſe the labours of the induſtrious.

On a ſudden, he perceived beneath the ſhade of a ſpreading Oak, a viſionary form, whoſe

whoſe aſpect beſpoke it ſomething divine. The old man ſtarted back, ſeized with religious dread.

I am Solomon, ſaid the ſhade, with a voice full of mildneſs. What art thou doing?

If thou art Solomon, anſwered the old man, why doſt thou aſk me? In my youth, didſt thou ſend me to the Ant: I admired her conduct, and if I am laborious, indefatigable 'tis ſhe that taught me. I ſtill practiſe the leſſons which I then learnt.

Thou art only wiſe by halves, replied the ſpirit; return to the Ant, and ſhe will teach thee, that in the winter of thy years, 'tis time to reſt, and enjoy the fruit of thy labours.

FABLE IV.

The Gift of the Fairies.

Two beneficent Fairies aſſiſted at the birth of a prince, who, in proceſs of time, became

came one of the greateſt monarchs in the country.

This child ſhall be my favourite, cry'd one, I will make him quick ſighted as an Eagle. It is well known, that though his kingdom is ſo prodigiouſly extenſive, yet the meaneſt inſect eſcapes not his view.———

That is a noble gift! interrupted the other Fairy; the prince will be the moſt diſcerning of mortals. But the Eagle has not only that ſharp-

neſs

neſs of ſight, which enables him to diſcover the meaneſt inſect; he has alſo that noble ſcorn which permits him not to purſue them; and this rare quality will I give the prince.

I am greatly obliged to thee, ſiſter, for this wiſe reſtriction, replied the firſt Fairy, and it is very true, that many kings would have been much greater, if their penetration had not made them enter into details too mean for the eyes of royalty.

FABLE

FABLE V.

The Sheep and the Swallow.

A SWALLOW alighted upon a Sheep, and plucked with her bill, a little wool from his back, in order to put into her neſt, the Sheep, in the mean time, ſhewing ſome diſpleaſure thereat: Whence comes it, ſaid the Swallow, that thou art ſo niggardly to me alone? Thou ſuffereſt the ſhepherd to take thy entire fleece, whilſt

whilſt thou refuſeſt to give me the ſmalleſt quantity, tho' it would be of ſo much ſervice to me.

The reaſon of it, replies the Sheep, is, that thou doſt not take it with ſo much ſkill as the ſhepherd.

FABLE VI.

The Raven.

THE Raven remarking, that the Eagle was thirty days in hatching her eggs, ſaid, within

within herſelf; it is this, undoubtedly, that makes the young Eaglets ſo ſtrong, and ſo ſharp ſighted. I'll try that method with my young.

Ever ſince that time, the Raven ſits thirty days on her eggs; yet, with all her toil, ſhe hatches nothing but paltry Ravens.

FABLE

Diſpute of the Beaſts in regard to Precedence. In four Fables.

FABLE VII. (1.)

THE Beaſts diſputed amongſt themſelves, which was of the greateſt worth. Let man be our judge, ſaid the Horſe; he is not intereſted in the quarrel, therefore he will be impartial.

But has he the underſtanding requiſite for ſo weighty a matter?

matter? ſaid the Mole, raiſing his voice, for 'tis neceſſary that he have a very penetrating one. Will he be able to diſcern our merit, which is not always viſible, even to the ſharpeſt eyes.

Well thought on! cried the Shrew-Mouſe.

In ſhort, replied the Hedge-Hog, I can never believe that man has penetration enough.

FABLE VIII. (2.)

MAN is choſen for a judge.

Anſwer me one queſtion, ſaid the Lion, thou mayſt give thy judgment afterwards. Man, by what ſtandard doſt thou intend to rate our merits?

By what ſtandard? A fine queſtion truly! By the greater, or leſs, degree of advantage I receive from you, to be ſure.

Vaſtly well! ſaid the Lion, piqued at this anſwer: at that rate

rate I ſhould be much leſs regarded than the Aſs. Man, thou canſt not be our judge. Retire.

FABLE IX. (3.)

THE man went his way.

Well Horſe, ſaid the Mole, with an air of ſelf-ſufficiency (the Shrew-Mouſe and the Hedge-Hog were of the ſame opinion) thou ſeeſt the Lion does not believe that the man can be a judge in the affair: the Lion thinks as we do.

Yes,

Yes, but I have better reaſons for it, ſaid the Lion, and caſt upon them, a look of ineffable diſdain.

FABLE X. (4.)

THE ſubject of our debate, continued the Lion, is, if I underſtand it aright, a matter of the utmoſt indifference. 'Tis equal to me, whether ye look upon me as the greateſt or the leaſt: I know myſelf, and that is ſufficient. When he

he had thus ſpoke, he left the aſſembly.

The wiſe Elephant, the couragious Tyger, the Bear everſerious, the noble, majeſtic Horſe, the crafty Fox; in a word, all thoſe who were conſcious of their own merits, or flattered themſelves therewith, quickly followed his example.

They that retired the laſt, and were the moſt diſcontented at the breaking up of the aſſembly were—the Monkey and the Aſs.

FABLE

FABLE XI.

The Bear and the Elephant.

WHAT unreaſonable creatures are men! ſaid the Bear to the Elephant; they are never ſatisfied with our ſervices, never think we have done enough; tho' at the bottom, we are better than they; they oblige me, who am of a ſerious diſpoſition, to dance to their ſilly muſic! Yet they know extremely well, that

ſuch

ſuch fooleries don't ſuit my gravity, my reſpectable demeanour; otherwiſe, wherefore do they laugh at my performances?

I dance likewiſe to their muſic, replied the Elephant, and I don't believe myſelf leſs grave, or leſs reſpectable than thou art; yet the ſpectators never laugh at me; ſo far from it, that admiration and pleaſure are viſibly impreſt on their countenances. Believe me, friend, men laugh,

not

not at ſeeing thee dance, but becauſe thou danceſt aukwardly.

FABLE XII.

The Oſtrich.

THE Rein-Deer, whoſe remarkable ſwiftneſs equals that of an arrow ſhot from a bow, ſaw the Oſtrich one day, and ſaid: The Oſtrich is no way remarkable for ſwiftneſs of foot, but undoubtedly ſhe flies much better.

Another

Another time the Eagle ſaw the Oſtrich and ſaid, the Oſtrich flies ill, but ſhe runs much better, I don't doubt.

Good Offices. In two Fables.

FABLE XIII. (1.)

HAST thou, ſaid the Bee to the Man, amongſt the whole race of animals, a greater benefactor than I am?

Undoubtedly I have, ſaid the man.

Who pray?——The Sheep; for her wool is abſolutely neceſſary, and thy honey is only agreeable to me.

FABLE XIV. (2.)

THERE is another reaſon, my good Bee, which makes me look upon the Sheep as a greater benefactor than thou art: She gives me her fleece without difficulty; but when thou giveſt thy honey, I am obliged to take care of thy ſting.

FABLE

FABLE XV.

The Oak.

ONE very ſtormy night, an impetuous north-wind had exerted all its rage againſt a large Oak. It fell at laſt, and in its fall, cruſh'd a vaſt number of ſhrubs and buſhes. The next morning a Fox, who had his hole in the neighbourhood, ſaw it, viewed it attentively, and ſaid; what a tree is this!

this! I ſhould never have thought it had been ſo large.

\+

Hiſtory of the Old Wolf. In ſeven Fables.

FABLE XVI. (1.)

A MISCHIEVOUS, ravenous Wolf took up, in his old age, a reſolution to live in a good underſtanding with the Shepherds; and not to delay the execution of this deſign, he went to a Shepherd who kept his flock in the neighbourhood. Shepherd,

Shepherd, ſays he, thou believeſt me to be a blood thirſty wretch and a thief, but thou art deceived. It is true, that when I'm oppreſs'd with hunger, I am obliged to ſeize a Sheep now and then; hunger is a terrible thing! But if thou wilt defend me from it, if thou wilt feed me, thou ſhalt be well pleaſed with me; for, in reality, no animal is milder than I am, when I am not hungry.

When

When thou art not hungry? ſaid the Shepherd, why art thou ever ſatisfied! No, thou art like the miſer, thou never haſt enough. Leave me.

FABLE XVII. (2.)

THE Wolf having met with a cool reception from the firſt Shepherd, went to a ſecond. My friend, ſays he, thou needeſt not be told, that I ſhall, in all likelihood, have it in my power to kill a great number of

of thy Sheep in the courſe of a year. If thou wilt agree to give me ſix during that time, I ſhall be content. Thou mayſt then ſleep in perfect ſecurity, and ſend away thy Dogs without heſitation.

Six Sheep! ſaid the Shepherd, 'tis a whole flock.

Well, ſaid the Wolf, I won't break with thee for a Sheep, I'll be ſatisfied with five.

Away! I ſcarcely ſacrifice five in the year to the God Pan.

What

What, wilt thou not give me four?

The Shepherd ſhook his head ſcornfully.

Three?——Two?

Not one, ſaid the Shepherd. I ſhould be a fool indeed to become tributary to an enemy, from whom I can ſecure myſelf by my own vigilance.

FABLE XVIII. (3.)

I SHALL ſucceed with the third, ſaid the Wolf within himſelf;

himſelf; I'll make another trial; and went to the third Shepherd.

It grieves me extremely, ſaid he, addreſſing himſelf to him, to find I am univerſally deteſted by you Shepherds, as an animal that delights in nothing but rapine and bloodſhed. I'll convince thee how unjuſt this character is. I alone am the terror of this neighbourhood: thou knoweſt I am. Give me but a ſingle Sheep every year, and I'll promiſe not to moleſt

thy flocks for the future; they may feed in ſafety wherever thou pleaſeſt. A Sheep——a mere trifle! Is it poſſible to be more generous, more diſintereſted? What doſt thou laugh at?

Oh, nothing! replied the Shepherd. Pray, friend, how old art thou?

That is none of thy buſineſs. I'm young enough to tear in pieces the Lambs thou valueſt moſt; never fear that.

Softly,

Softly, old thief; I'm grieved thou art come ſo late to make me this propoſal. Thy teeth, worn to the ſtumps with frequent ſlaughters, betray thee; thou makeſt a ſhew of generoſity, only that thou mayeſt feaſt thy ravenous appetite with the greater eaſe and ſecurity.

FABLE XIX. (4.)

The Wolf's fury began to riſe, but he contained himſelf,

ſelf, and went to a fourth Shepherd, who had juſt loſt his Dog: He took advantage of this circumſtance, and accoſted him as follows.

Shepherd, ſays he, I have quarrelled with my brethren of the foreſt; and will never more be reconciled to them. I need not tell thee how much damage they may do thee. If thou wilt take me into thy ſervice in the room of thy Dog who died lately, I will make thee a promiſe that they will never

never dare to touch, or even look at, thy Sheep.

That is to ſay, replied the Shepherd, that thou wouldſt defend them from their fury.

What other intention could I have? Yes, I would defend them at the peril of my life.

Very well! But when I have taken thee into my fold, whom ſhall I have to hinder thee from devouring them? Anſwer me that. If a man ſhould receive a thief into his houſe, in order that he might

defend

defend it from thieves without, we ſhould look upon him as———

Oh! I underſtand thee, ſaid the Wolf; thou art in the moralizing ſtrain. Adieu.

FABLE XX. (5.)

THE Wolf foamed with rage: Ah! ſays he, that I was young again! But it don't ſignify, I muſt ſubmit he ſaid, and went to a fifth Shepherd.

Shepherd, ſaid he, doſt thou know me?

I know ſuch as thou art, too well.

Such as I am? I believe not. I am a Wolf indeed; but a Wolf of ſo ſingular, ſo extraordinary, a diſpoſition, that I deſerve thy friendſhip, and the good will of all the Shepherds in the country.

Wherein art thou ſo very extraordinary, prithee?

I cannot prevail upon myſelf to tear, or to eat, any living Sheep, were it even to ſave my life. I eat none but

thoſe that are already dead. I appeal to thee if that is not an extremely good quality.

This being the caſe, thou wilt, I hope, give me leave to walk round thy fold now and then, to ſee whether———

Say no more, anſwered the Shepherd; thou muſt refrain even dead Sheep, if thou wouldſt have me for thy friend; for hunger would perſuade thee in a ſhort time that thoſe are dead, which are only ſick; and that thoſe are

ſick,

ſick, which are in health. Go thy way then, and think not of my friendſhip.

FABLE XXI.

LET me, ſays the Wolf as he went to a ſixth Shepherd, offer as a ſecurity, what I value above all things; perhaps I may thereby attain my ends. Accordingly he accoſts the Shepherd as under.

What doſt thou think to my ſkin?

Thy ſkin? Let me ſee—— 'tis a very fine one. The Dogs have ſeldom torn it, methinks.

Look ye, Shepherd, I am old, I can't live long; Give me food for the remainder of my life, and I'll leave you my ſkin when I die.

Ah! ah! ſaid the Shepherd, what old miſer hath taught thee theſe tricks? No, no, at that rate thy ſkin would coſt me a hundred times the worth of it; but if thou haſt a mind

to

to be generous, give it me now——The Shepherd ſeized his club, and the Wolf fled.

FABLE XXII. (7.)

CRUEL, flinty hearted dogs! ſaid he, trembling with rage and fury. Let me die then, and revenge my death upon them, ſince they drive me to ſuch extremities.

He ſaid, and ruſhed into the Shepherds huts; threw down, tore, and mangled their children,

ren, and was not killed at laſt, but with a great deal of trouble.

It was then they began to perceive their error, and ſaid; we have acted like fools to drive this old plunderer to the laſt extremity. Perhaps he would have become better at length: It would, to be ſure, have been a work of time, and the change would have been effected in ſpite of himſelf, yet were we in the wrong to deprive him of the means of amendment.

FABLE

FABLE XXIII.

The Mouſe.

A PHILOSOPHIC Mouſe was reflecting on the kindneſs of nature. This indulgent mother, ſaid ſhe, has made the preſervation of Mice a particular object of her attention; for her beneficent hand has given wings to one half of our race, to the end, that if the Cats ſhould ever entirely deſtroy our kind here

on

on earth, the ſpecies might be reſtored again by the Bats.

The pious Mouſe knew not that there are winged Cats. In this manner our vanity is frequently founded upon our ignorance.

FABLE XXIV.

The Swallow.

BELIEVE me, friends, the great world ſuits neither the poet nor the philoſopher!

Their

Their merit is unknown in it, and they are too often weak enough to exchange it for a frivolous one.

Formerly the ſong of the Swallow equalled, in muſic, that of the Nightingale; but ſhe was quickly weary of living in the woods, and of having none to hear and admire her, except the induſtrious labourer, and the innocent ſhepherdeſs. She left her friend, who had more modeſty than herſelf, and took up her lodgings

ings in the city. What was the conſequence? Why, as the people there had not time to hear her ſongs, ſhe forgot to ſing by little and little, and learnt to build.

FABLE XXV.

The Eagle.

THE Eagle being aſked, why ſhe brought up her young in the airy regions, anſwered, by aſking this queſtion; Would they ever dare

to

to ſoar into the neighbourhood of the Sun, if from their infancy, I accuſtomed them to creep upon the ground?

FABLE XXVI.

The young Stag and the old one.

A STAG, to whom indulgent nature had granted a life of ſeveral ages, ſaid one day to his youngeſt cub: I remember the times extremely well, when mankind had not

the uſe of that fiery tube, which belches thunder.

What happy times for our ſpecies! cried the young one with a ſigh.

Not ſo happy as thou thinkeſt, cried the old one. Times were then different; but they were not better. Men had bows and arrows, and we received full as much hurt from thoſe weapons, as we do at preſent from guns.

FABLE

FABLE XXVII.

The Peacock and the Hen.

LOOK how thy Cock ſtruts, how full of vanity he appears! how puffed up with pride! Yet men do not ſay; proud as a Cock, but, proud as a Peacock.

That is, ſaid the Hen, becauſe man blames not a well founded pride. If the Cock is proud, it is of his watchfulneſs and vigour; but thou, what

what art thou proud of?—Of thy feathers, and thy gaudy colours!

FABLE XXVIII.

The Stag.

NATURE had given a Stag a ſhape extremely beautiful; a long mane waved upon his neck. Well, ſaid he, I think I may paſs for an Elk. From that time he became a prey to vanity. What does he do in order to reſemble that animal?

mal? Why he hangs down his head in a penſive manner, and pretends to be troubled with the falling ſickneſs; a diſeaſe to which the Elk is ſubject.

Thus it is, that a dull fellow believes the people will not take him for a wit, unleſs he complain of a violent head-ach, and pretend to be troubled with vapours.

FABLE

FABLE XXIX.

The Eagle and the Fox.

DON'T be ſo proud of thy manner of flying, ſaid the Fox to the Eagle; if thou doſt ſoar ſo high, it is only that thou mayſt be better able to find out dead carcaſſes and carrion.

Thus it is, that many men become profound philoſophers, not out of the love of truth, but from a deſire of obtaining ſome lucrative office.

FABLE

FABLE XXX.

The Shepherd and the Nightingale.

THOU complaineſt, Oh favourite of the Muſes, of the noiſy croud of the inſects of Parnaſſus? Hear what reply the Shepherd made to the Nightingale.

One calm delightful ſummer evening, a Shepherd ſpoke to the ſongſter of the woods, who ſat ſilent on the ſpray: Sing, dear Nightingale, ſing. Alas!

Alas! the Frogs make ſuch a noiſe, anſwered the Nightingale, that I have no deſire to ſing. Doſt thou not hear them?

Undoubtedly, I hear them, ſaid the Shepherd, but thy ſilence only is the reaſon.

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